

AFGHANISTAN: A WAR OF NECESSITY?

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

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Nine Years have passed since Coalition forces removed the Taliban from power, yet a persistent conflict continues, and insurgents are still present and in some cases control various parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Many U.S citizens, however, continue to question the “necessity” of winning the war in Afghanistan and whether it’s vital to our national interests. Afghanistan continues to be central to the war on terrorism and the United States and allies cannot withdraw until the country is secure. In the wake of 9/11, invading Afghanistan was a war of necessity. Due to the severe training shortfalls, Afghan security forces currently cannot offer the required protection to the people. Governance is still appalling and corruption is rampant. Only the United States has the resources to fix it. The United States needed to act in self-defense to defeat al Qaeda, and minimize the chance of a terrorist attack on American citizens. Henry Kissinger worries that a bad result in Afghanistan will create a big bang, but not a good one. This begs the question, “Is Afghanistan truly a war of necessity?”

AFGHANISTAN: A WAR OF NECESSITY?

We shall not fail or falter; we shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle nor the long-drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools and we will finish the job.¹

—Sir Winston Churchill

At the time Winston Churchill spoke these words, the war with Germany was at a crucial stage. Hitler and his army occupied a majority of central Europe and Great Britain was poised at a moment wherein they had to make an important decision. They were torn between fighting to the death for their freedom and the freedom of Europe or surrendering to what appeared to be the overwhelming supremacy of the Third Reich. Great Britain, in alliance with the United States, chose the only option it saw as viable – to steel itself against the threat to its very existence and fight for life. The United States is at similar crossroads in time. Nine Years have passed since Coalition forces removed the Taliban from power, yet a persistent conflict continues, and insurgents are still present and in some cases control various parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan. During the 2008 election, then Democratic nominee Barack Obama campaigned on the “necessity” of winning in Afghanistan. Many U.S citizens, however, continue to question the “necessity” of winning the war in Afghanistan and whether it’s “vital” to our national interests. Americans also continue to ask what victory should look like in the end. This paper examines the historical basis of how the Bush Administration, through the creation of the “Bush Doctrine,”² used a preemptive and proactive national security strategy to change America’s approach to fighting both internal and external threats to national security. In light of the Bush Doctrine, this paper will examine President Obama’s Strategy and examine the underpinnings of the purported war of necessity in

Afghanistan. Further, it sets forth a recommendation as to a strategy to win in Afghanistan.

Background

As a result of al Qaeda's attack on September 11, 2001, nearly 3,000 Americans were killed. This was the worst attack on U.S. soil in our nation's history. The aftermath has changed life in America forever. Since 9/11, al Qaeda and its affiliates have killed thousands of innocent people around the world including fellow Muslims in nations such as Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia.³ For the first time in its history, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, the collective defense clause. As a result, we saw our NATO partners actively engage in the fight against terrorism by launching operations outside of the European/Atlantic area.⁴ This unprecedented act demonstrated the global commitment of our allies to defeat the extremists responsible for the devastation of 9/11. Understanding the Bush doctrine is critical to understanding the complexities of defining why the United States is in Afghanistan. The Bush doctrine changed four times in four years. The United States did not appear to have a cogent focused strategy in Afghanistan after our concentration shifted to the fight in Iraq in March 2003.

Upon assuming office in January 2008, President Obama set out to make a number of changes in how the war was being fought in Afghanistan. First, he asserted that multiple intelligence estimates warned that al Qaeda was actively planning attacks on the United States homeland from its safe-haven in Pakistan.⁵ Second, and most significantly, he replaced the NATO commander, General David D. McKiernan with General Stanley McCrystal. Many in the President Obama's administration viewed General McKiernan as a conventional warfighter and rather cautious in his approach in

Afghanistan. President Obama had a new strategy, a new mission and a new NATO commander in Afghanistan. His decision to fire General McKiernan represents one of a handful of times since President Truman's firing of General Douglas MacArthur in 1951 that civilian leadership has relieved a wartime commander. President Obama then tasked General McCrystal to examine course of actions for a shifting approach in Afghanistan and to develop an effective strategy. Shortly thereafter, General McCrystal revealed a counterinsurgency strategy to meet President Obama's tasking.

To reach a complete understanding and develop a United States' strategy for the complexities of Afghanistan, it is paramount to define some of the essential terms. Insurgency as defined by The *United States Army Operations Field Manual-3-0*, is "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict. It is normally a politically motivated conflict that involves significant intra or interstate violence."⁶

Two other terms relevant to our discussion on strategy are "necessity" and "vital." What does necessity mean? According to the *World Net Web*, "necessity" is defined as the condition of being essential or indispensable.⁷ According to Richard N. Haass, the President of the Council on Foreign Relations, wars of necessity must meet two tests.⁸ First, they must meet vital national interests and second, they must employ no alternative courses of action short of using military force to protect the vital interests. Using Haass' definition, a few examples of previous wars that were regarded as "necessary" include: World War II, Korean War and the Persian Gulf War.⁹ What is a vital interest? Joseph Collins from the *Armed Forces Journal* defined a vital interest as "One of such grave importance that a nation must fight to secure it."¹⁰

Bush Doctrine

The Bush doctrine is not easy to define. Even candidates running for National Office sometimes find it difficult to articulate. During an interview on September 11, 2008, ABC “World News” anchorman, Charlie Gibson asked then, Republican Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin if she agreed with the Bush doctrine. She hesitated for a moment to collect her thoughts when Mr. Gibson began to enthusiastically lecture Mrs. Palin on the Bush doctrine. He stated that, “the United States has the right of anticipatory self-defense and the right of pre-emptive strike against any country we believe is going to attack us.”¹¹ Although Mr. Gibson was partially accurate, the definition of Bush doctrine is more complicated. Charles Krauthammer, a Pulitzer Prize winning columnist, is credited with coming up with the definition of the “Bush Doctrine”, in a cover essay for the magazine *Weekly Standard* in June 2001.¹² In his essay entitled, “The Bush Doctrine: AMB, Kyoto and the New American Unilateralism,” Charles Krauthammer suggests that the United States had, “A major change in foreign policy when we withdrew from the Anti-ballistic missile treaty and rejected the Kyoto protocol promoting United States unilateralism.”¹³ This major change in foreign policy is the earliest definition of Bush doctrine.

Krauthammer then suggested the Bush doctrine changed after the attacks on September 11, 2001.¹⁴ When President Bush gave his speech to the joint sessions of Congress nine days after the September 11th attack, he spoke of a “for us or against us” policy. Secretary of State Colin Powell and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage first used the “for us against us” policy with Pakistan when they presented seven non-negotiable demands to the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI); Director Lt.

General Mahmood Ahmed.¹⁵ The demands, which fueled the Bush doctrine change, were:

- Give the US blanket over-flight and landing rights for all US aircraft across the world
- Give the US access to airports, naval bases, and borders for operations against al Qaeda
- Provide immediate intelligence sharing and cooperation
- Cut all shipments of fuel to the Taliban and stop Pakistani fighters from joining them
- Publicly condemn the 9/11 attacks
- End support for the Taliban and break diplomatic relations with them
- Stop al Qaeda operations on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, intercept arms shipments through Pakistan, and end all logistical support for al Qaeda¹⁶

This “for us or against us” doctrine that came out of the seven demands to Pakistan became the essence of the second Bush doctrine.

The third Bush doctrine morphed out of words enunciated by President Bush in September and October 2002, when going to war with Iraq was inevitable. President Bush announced the United States policy of a pre-emptive war as one of the major “justifications” for combat operations.¹⁷ This ability for the United States to conduct a pre-emptive attack is the third definition of the Bush doctrine.

The final change and current definition of the Bush doctrine is the idea that the United States foreign policy must spread democracy throughout the world.¹⁸ President Bush articulated his remarks to the American people at his second inaugural address when he said, “The survival of liberty in our land immensely depends on the success of

liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in the entire world.”¹⁹

Krauthammer believes that all presidential doctrines are hard to define except for ones that came out of single presidential statements like the Monroe and Truman doctrine.²⁰ This is not the case with the Bush doctrine, making it difficult to define.

The Bush doctrine explained our involvement in the war in Afghanistan and the notion that survival of our liberty in the United States is the reason that Afghanistan is a war of necessity.

Obama Strategy

In March 2009, President Barack Obama articulated a new strategy for Afghanistan. He stated that “The United States has a clear and a focused goal: to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to prevent its return to either country in the future.”²¹ In order to achieve this goal, America needs a stronger, smarter, and more comprehensive strategy. In a speech at the United States Military Academy at West Point on 1 December 2009, President Obama stated that, “Afghanistan is vital to our national interests”.²² If Afghanistan is vital to our national interests then The *National Security Strategy* (NSS) should reflect this view. President Obama assumed office in January 2009 and as of March 2010 he had yet to issue this essential document. Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act mandates that a new president issue an NSS within five months of taking office or by 15 June. Thereafter the document is required to be published annually. According to Lawrence Korb, President Obama passed the deadline without delivering an NSS, despite several of his cabinets continuing to develop key tactical documents.²³ If

Afghanistan is indeed vital to our national interests then President Obama must publish the now delinquent NSS.

The American people have expressed a sense as to what degree our continued involvement in Afghanistan fits into the United States national interests. Additionally, many average Americans debate whether we have the correct strategy in Afghanistan. A Gallup poll from December 2009, suggests that Americans are split on President Obama's handling of the situation in Afghanistan.²⁴ Although approval rating poll numbers increased slightly when the president announced his new strategy on 1 December 2009, it was not the trend in the previous few months. In fact, the poll numbers slipped to an all time low approval rate of 35 percent in November 2009. This was down from 49 percent in September 2009 and down 56 percent in July 2009.²⁵ An ABC News-Washington Post poll supported the Gallup poll's results, finding that the majority of Americans believe the War in Afghanistan is not worth fighting.²⁶ Poll results suggest after nearly nine years of commitment, the American people want to know if the military still needs to fight in a country where Afghan corruption and personal gain seem to be more important than national interests.

President Obama first entertained a strategy in Afghanistan to avoid putting additional United States Soldiers on the ground. He considered a counterterrorism strategy, which would allow us to either kill or capture high value targets with the use of highly technological drones, Tomahawk cruise missiles or special operations personnel. The goals of a counterterrorism strategy would revolve around relying on unmanned drone attacks and special-operations troops to hunt individual militants, an idea championed by Vice President Biden.²⁷ This type of strategy, simple and straight

forward, resonates with the American people; therefore, counterterrorist approaches have gained momentum recently because the strategy is consistent with President Obama's stated policy and is easy to understand.²⁸ However, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, whose country represents the European Union, and other Europeans, do not believe the counterterrorism strategy will work.²⁹ They question the reason "why" there are no drone strikes in the Peshawar or Quetta Region even though intelligence analysts recognize al Qaeda and Taliban are hiding.³⁰ In the end, President Obama decided against exclusively using the counterterrorism approach, instead opting to send additional troops and adapt a counterinsurgency strategy.

This is the current situation in Afghanistan. To counter these conditions, United States Central Command Commander, General Petraeus, believes that the counterinsurgency strategy "should focus on the fact that the decisive terrain is the human terrain, not a piece of land or river crossing."³¹ By focusing on the population, it can help to improve security for local people and help to delegitimize the harsh methods the Taliban extremists used from 1996 to 2001 on the Afghan people.³² This is especially true if one can contrast one's ability and willingness to support and protect the population with the often-horrific actions of insurgent groups. Indeed, exposing insurgent ideologies, indiscriminate violence and oppressive practices can help the Afghan people to realize that their lives are unlikely to be improved if the Taliban control the country.

On 2 July 2009, General Petraeus tasked the Commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force (COMISAF)/ U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A), General

Stanley McCrystal, to “provide a multidisciplinary assessment for the current situation in Afghanistan.”³³

One of the outcomes from his assessment was that General McCrystal, believed his command was "not adequately executing the basics" of counterinsurgency by putting the Afghan people first. He believes ISAF personnel must be seen as guests of the Afghan people and their government - not an occupying army.”³⁴ If the military simply kills off all the bad guys and doesn't have a counterinsurgency program focused on the population, new “bad guys” will be trained and will come back in an alarmingly fast rate.³⁵

It is crucial to have a counterinsurgency plan that is properly resourced by the United States to carry out President Obama's strategy. To put it into context, the economic impact of the 9/11 attacks launched by Afghanistan based terrorists have been estimated to be more than \$80 billion.³⁶ This level of additional resources required to avert the reestablishment of Taliban supported terrorist capabilities in Afghanistan is prudent insurance for United States' national security. Currently, the levels of resources required to conduct counterinsurgency operations are achievable by our national security budget. Presently, we spend about three times as much in military operations in Iraq as we do in Afghanistan (the Administration's FY '09 supplemental requested \$684 billion for Iraq and \$223 billion for Afghanistan).³⁷ As military forces are drawn down in Iraq, there will be sufficient manpower available and resources to support requirements in Afghanistan. Undertaking a counterinsurgency campaign is complex, and it will require additional resources, both civilian and military. All stakeholders must see progress in relatively short order to demonstrate that America is

not throwing good money after bad and risking additional American and civilian casualties. McCrystal writes, "Resources will not win the war, but under-resourcing could lose it."³⁸

War of Necessity

On 17 August 2009, President Obama said, "This is not a war of choice. This is a war of necessity. Those who attacked America on 9/11 are plotting to do so again. If left unchecked, the Taliban insurgency will mean an even larger safe haven from which al Qaeda would plot to kill more Americans. So this is not only a war worth fighting; this is fundamental to the defense of our people."³⁹ President Obama's statement highlights the importance of the war of necessity, but it is much more than that. A House Republican report released in September 2009 stated that a loss in Afghanistan would inspire the enemies that would project harm on the United States.⁴⁰ Afghanistan has a history for allowing Islamic extremists a place to train and promote their radical views. This became all too familiar in 1993 when six Arab extremists, trained in Afghanistan, tried to blow-up the World Trade Center in New York.⁴¹ As a result of the attack, six people were killed and 1,000 were injured. The radicals believed they could defeat another super power just as Afghanistan did to the Soviet Union in 1989.⁴² The coalition must succeed in Afghanistan in order to continue to protect America and preserve its role as a true superpower.

America must show a long-term commitment to the Afghan people. The Afghan people have a reason to mistrust American intentions based on what it did in 1989. Shortly after the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, the United States essentially abandoned the Afghan people by withdrawing support. Support in terms of billions of dollars and arms to the Mujahedeen, who fought for 10 years against the Soviets.⁴³ For

the past 30 years the Afghans have lived in a continuous war environment, which has caused their standard of living to be at or near the bottom of every international category measured.⁴⁴ A few examples are highlighted below:

- Afghan Gross Domestic Product at less than \$200
- Basic health care is considered a luxury
- Infant mortality rate is 165 per 1000 births; ranks last in world
- 10% of school aged children attended school, none were girls⁴⁵

Consequently, the United States must move promptly to raise the standard of life and show a long-term commitment to the Afghan people.

Another reason that makes this a war of necessity is the amount of time and money the United States and NATO forces have put into training the ANSF. Maintaining such a sizeable force over a broad number of years is just not sustainable for the Afghan government given that the ANSF would exceed its means without continued support from the international community. It currently costs about 3.5 billion dollars annually for both the army and the police.⁴⁶

Finally, Afghanistan is a war of necessity for President Obama because he cannot lose “face” with the rest of the world, especially during his first term in office. He has too much riding on winning in Afghanistan. During a press conference question and answer session after a meeting with India’s Prime Minister Manjohan Singh, President Obama boldly stated that, “after eight years, some of those years in which we did not have, I think, either the resources of the strategy to get the job done, it is my intention to finish the job.”⁴⁷ He made a commitment to the Afghan people and the honor, reputation and status of the United States is at stake. Nobel Prize winner Thomas Schelling reinforced this idea arguing in his essay, *Arms and Influence* that “face” is not

only a subject of a country's "worth, status or honor", but its reputation for action.⁴⁸ He goes on to say that "face" put into this type of context is one of the few things worth fighting over."⁴⁹ The Afghan problem is not easy to solve, but failure to act would be disastrous in terms of United States interests.

Pakistan: The Critical Link

The future of Afghanistan is inextricably linked to the future of its eastern border neighbor, Pakistan. In order to stabilize the region, the United States and NATO forces must partner with Pakistan. Since 2001 when Osama Bin Laden escaped into the Tora Bora mountain region, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Gordon Brown has indicated Pakistan has not done enough to support the war effort.⁵⁰ In fact, Peter Bergen, a terrorism expert, reconstructs the Battle for Tora Bora in 2001, calling it "one of the greatest military blunders in recent United States history."⁵¹ Failure to fully support the war effort has caused the United States to have a basic mistrust for Pakistan. Since the 1980s, with the birth of al Qaeda in Peshawar, Pakistan's oldest city, to the attacks of 9/11, al Qaeda and the Taliban have moved across the border to the remote areas of Pakistan in Northern Waziristan to Afghanistan. They have used the mountainous terrain along the 1,640-mile border with Afghanistan as a safe-haven to hide, train jihad terrorists, communicate with followers, plot attacks and send foot soldiers to support the insurgency in Afghanistan.⁵² For the American people, this area has become one of the most dangerous places in the world.

Pakistan is considered by many in the United States to be a lawless and tribal area.⁵³ For years the government of Pakistan denied that the Taliban and al Qaeda were a security threat until April 2009 when the Pakistan Taliban attacked and came within 60 miles of the capital Islamabad.⁵⁴

From Pakistan's perspective, they also have a basic mistrust for United States hearkening from the mid 1980s when we were funneling money through Pakistan's ISI for Mujahedeen fighters to defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan, and to suddenly applying sanctions for a non declared nuclear program.⁵⁵ United States sanctions became intense in October 1990, when we blocked the delivery of F-16 jets already purchased by Pakistan.⁵⁶ At the same time, the United States halted all new weapons programs and military exchange programs with Pakistan.

Moreover, Pakistan believes the United States is trying to push them around by demanding they destroy Taliban sanctuaries in the North Waziristan region. Pakistani officials cite the fact that the United States continues to send drones over its border to destroy Taliban without prior coordination supports their predisposed argument.⁵⁷ This has caused the Pakistani government to distrust the United States. If Pakistan can control the mountainous region along their eastern border, the outcome could have enormous potential in the fight against Islamic extremists.

The United States and Pakistan must quit rehashing history and stop quibbling in order to unite and defeat the Taliban. If the two countries worked together instead of against each other, a positive goal or regional stability could be achieved. David Ignatius calls this a "positive sum" game.⁵⁸ Currently, harmful rhetoric is being sent back and forth between the United States and Pakistan, which isn't good for either country.

However things could be turning around; in January 2009, President Obama sent the Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, to Pakistan to promote better cooperation in

fighting Islamic extremists, to forge closer military ties, and to open a better dialogue with Islamabad.⁵⁹

In order for the United States to be successful with operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan is going to have to be a trusted partner. The Chairman of the House Committee on Armed Services, Ike Skelton, does not believe that America can successfully root out al Qaeda in Pakistan if the United States does not win in Afghanistan and prevent this terrorist organization from using Pakistan as a safe haven to train and launch attacks against the United States⁶⁰

Expansion of the Security Forces

To bring stability to Central Asia, the ANSF are going to have to expand exponentially. In his speech at the United States Army War College on January 26, 2010, General Bismullah Khan, Chief of the Afghanistan National Army's General Staff said that, "The security of Afghanistan is the number one priority of the government."⁶¹ If one supports that line of thought then the focus should be on rapidly training the ANSF and increasing trainers for the military and police currently in Afghanistan. Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell IV, commander in charge of training the Afghan security forces, defines winning or losing the war in Afghanistan as to how many Afghans are trained and ready to fight.⁶² Stephen Biddle, a senior fellow for defense policy at the Council on Foreign Relations, states that, "the security of the people of Afghanistan is the center of gravity and believes the Afghan security forces should continue to be expanded and we should put an Afghan face on the war."⁶³ However, the effort to build up the police and military has floundered. As of January 2010, there were about 100,000 Afghan Soldiers; of these soldiers only 52,000 showed up for work regularly.⁶⁴ The NATO commander's plan in January 2010 called for 172,000 Afghans to be trained

by October 2011.⁶⁵ This may be an ambitious proposal considering the high illiteracy rate, endemic corruption at all levels, and high desertion rate. General Petraeus acknowledged the massive challenge and that some of the initial goals would not be met.⁶⁶ According to a report from Afghanistan, General Caldwell said, "The tide may be turning."⁶⁷ In January 2010, he reported that, "There had been a wave of recruits for the Afghan Army, most likely because of pay increases that put salaries close to the scale of the of Taliban fighters, who is their largest competitor."⁶⁸ The pay increase has also been identified as a major factor in contributing to "lower level" Taliban joining the Afghan security forces.⁶⁹

Anthony Cordesman from the Center for Strategic and International Studies believes ANSF readiness is critical and that as many ANSF be trained as quickly as possible without "rushing to failure."⁷⁰ The United States should have surmised the importance of quality training in April 2004 when Iraqi Security forces engaged in an intense fight with extremists in Fallujah. As soon as the Iraqi Security Forces felt overwhelmed, they fled from the scene precisely at the height of combat operations. Their performance revealed incompetent commanders and untrained "forces."⁷¹ We don't want to have to rediscover this lesson with the ANSF. However in December 2009, a report prepared for the United States Military Commanders on the readiness of the ANSF revealed a disturbing trend that their forces are not taking charge in battle.⁷²

Brigadier General, Simon Levey from the United Kingdom does not believe ANSF readiness is a problem even though basic training has been cut by two weeks to get soldiers to the field.⁷³ General Levy said: "The key thing to remember about the army is you don't need a Rolls Royce out here, you need a rugged 4x4. They have got

to be better than the Taliban. That is the key thing."⁷⁴ More troublesome is a statement by the Afghan minister of defense, Abdul Rabim Wardak, who says his forces aim to be "self-reliant in the next three to five years".⁷⁵ However, he also cautions that talk of an exit strategy would be a strategic mistake and have "catastrophic consequences" for the Afghan people."⁷⁶ The Afghans need to feel that the international organizations are not going to abandon them again reminiscent of the Soviet departure in 1980. Training the ANSF must be the focus if the coalition is to succeed with the President Obama's strategy.

The Taliban has the momentum and are controlling more territory, and contesting more districts than they did in 2009. The trend can be reversed, but to succeed in Afghanistan, there must be a viable ANSF.

Recommendations

President Obama must publish a new NSS to ensure the country, cabinets and, most importantly, military commanders have clear and comprehensive guidance on their role within broader United States national security efforts.

Training the ANSF is a key and essential part of the President's strategy, but on its own is insufficient. Once Afghanistan is secure, a Multi-national peacekeeping force should be stationed there similar to the forces in the Sinai who observe and report to ensure that both Egypt and Israel are keeping within the signed Camp David peace accords. This is the level of international assistance that will be required for Afghanistan over the next ten years in order to establish a sustainable national security (military and police) capability sufficient to protect the nation against insurgents.

Another approach both Pakistan and President Karzai have recently endorsed is to negotiate and reconcile with certain factions of the Taliban. Essentially this would

allow the Taliban to reacquire portions of Afghanistan and possibly be represented in the current Karzai government. This strategy is worth exploring, but Senator John Kerry believes that, "A narrow mission that cedes half the country to the Taliban could lead to civil war and put Pakistan at risk."⁷⁷ Many in the administration are convinced the Taliban is too ingrained in Afghanistan's culture to ever be entirely defeated. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton pointed out, "Not every Taliban is an extremist ally."⁷⁸ That could mean paving the way for Taliban members willing to renounce violence to participate in a central government.

America must assume risk and assist the Afghan government in sorting out who is the real enemy. Sorting the reconcilable is not an easy task for anyone to undertake. On the flipside, it is a foolish and dangerous idea to assume the Taliban would not provide a safe haven to al Qaeda or any other militant group seeking to attack the United States. For the Afghan people, a return to Taliban rule would condemn their country to brutal governance, international isolation, a paralyzed economy, and deny basic human rights to the Afghan people-especially women. This is the same treatment they experienced for five years under an oppressive Taliban. The return of al Qaeda terrorists who would accompany the Taliban would subject Afghanistan to a continued state of violent unrest and dismal existence. A common enemy threatens the United States, its friends and allies, and the people of Afghanistan who have suffered the most at the hands of violent extremists. Allowing the Taliban to return to Afghanistan goes against President Obama's strategy of disrupting, dismantling and defeating al Qaeda. However, the United States must take a long-term look at having the Taliban represented in the Afghan central government.

A military fighting an insurgency on behalf of a corrupt and illegitimate government cannot succeed. An Afghan central government is doomed for failure and will continue to appear illegitimate without some type of equitable power-sharing initiative between the major ethnic groups. Recently a number of United States officials including United States Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, criticized Afghan President Hamid Karzai and expressed concerns about corruption in the top ranks of his administration. In order to better understand the gravity of the situation in the Afghan government, it is important to understand that there are five ethnic groups, which make up Afghanistan. The Pashtu's are the largest group in Afghanistan, comprising 42%, yet they are still not a majority. Two of the minority ethnic groups, the Hazaras and Uzbeks, making approximately 9% of the population, do not have governmental representation. This is largely due to the presidential political system in Afghanistan. The president is directly elected through a "second ballot system," requiring the support of more than 50% of the voting electorate. If none of the candidates receives more than fifty percent of the votes, then a second round is held with only the top two candidates from the first round participating in the second election. This is exactly the situation that occurred in the July 2009 elections. After hundreds of thousands of fraudulent votes were discounted, Karzai did not receive 50% of the vote. Thus a runoff had been sought between Karzai and his opponent Abdullah Abdullah, the former Tajik foreign minister. Eventually Abdullah Abdullah conceded the election, assuming the odds were stacked against him. Despite Karzai's victory, many Afghans question the legitimacy of the election, and therefore the legitimacy of the Afghanistan government.⁷⁹ Wakil Ahmed Muttawakil, who served as the Taliban foreign minister before the movement was defeated in 2001,

says, "There can be no trust in this government; it is weak and lacks authority."⁸⁰ Fred Kaplan has gone on record saying, "The Afghan people's allegiance is the object of the war."⁸¹ Until President Karzai's government earns the trust of the people by equitable cabinet representation, ending their corrupt practices, and providing essential services to serve the Afghan people, they will never be seen as legitimate. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen reinforced this idea on September 15, 2009 while testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee. He declared that, "The Taliban are winning because there is clearly the lack of legitimacy of the government."⁸² Therefore the coalition must focus specifically on governance at the central government with President Karzai and his entire cabinet. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton understands the urgency and is dispatching civilians to help improve governance and provide services. In October 2009, she and Deputy Secretary of State Jack Lew said that almost 300 U.S. agronomists, diplomats, legal experts and others had been sent to Afghanistan since March. They were part of Obama's "civilian surge," bringing the total there to 603.⁸³ The current plan is to commit 974 civilians by the end of January 2010 and eventually to triple the number of civilians deploying to Afghanistan.⁸⁴ NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen echoed the need to create a stable government in Afghanistan that can be dealt with. Otherwise, he believes, "The world will be faced with instability in Afghanistan and the region."⁸⁵

Currently President Karzai's central government does not provide the Afghan people with food, clean water, medical care, infrastructure projects or an economic means to provide for their families. Lack of these provisions causes Afghan people to question the necessity for a central government. The perceived illegitimacy of the

Afghan government and corruption of many of its officials currently poses the biggest dilemma facing us in Afghanistan. We will not succeed unless we get the Afghan government fixed.

Despite the strict sanctions the United States imposed on Pakistan in 1990, and the severing of military- to-military partnership programs, we must convince Pakistan that once Afghanistan is stable our countries will remain long-term partners. Pakistan is a country armed with nuclear weapons and confronts a growing problem with extremists within their borders.

Conclusion

In the wake of 9/11, invading Afghanistan was a war of necessity. The United States needed to act in self-defense to defeat al Qaeda, and minimize the chance of a terrorist attack on American citizens. President Obama was correct when he called the war in Afghanistan “a war of necessity.”⁸⁶ Yes, it is vital to our national interests, but only if we fully commit the proper resources needed to defeat al Qaeda and Taliban forces. A United States and allied retreat from Afghanistan would have a negative and destabilizing effect in Central Asia. Imagine the perceptions that would set in the minds of extremists and the endless possibilities it could open up. The insecure Afghans are frustrated by nine years of poorly measured progress. The Taliban continues to gain strength on the Pakistani border. A United States withdrawal would embolden the extremists just as it did in 1993 when they attacked the World Trade Center the first time. The ideological image of defeating the United States would help create the conditions for a massive global recruiting effort.

Afghanistan continues to be central to the war on terrorism and the United States and allies cannot withdraw until the country is secure. The country won't be secured

until the severe training shortfalls of the Afghan security forces is fixed. Governance is still appalling and corruption is rampant. Only the United States has the resources to fix it. If the Bush Doctrine is correct, and the United States is to remain a leader in spreading democracy across the globe, it is imperative to implement the recommendations outlined above. Henry Kissinger worries that a bad result in Afghanistan will create a big bang, but not a good one. Still, I believe the war in Afghanistan is, indeed, a necessity at this time.

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